/12 cont./

687 426 If the blood-price was not paid within a certain period, then at the end of the year, in place of a debt of four spans, five were owed, in place of five, six, and six became seven, so that an already considerable debt increased still more and weighed like a heavy burden on the shoulders of the debtor. But the Abkhaz had one excellent custom -- that of coming to the aid of an insolvent debtor. All the latter had to do was to announce that he "owed for blood," and everybody contributed his mite to pay off the debt.

796 687 608 The following ceremony was considered the best way to a complete reconciliation of the parties involved in a blood-feud. A relative of the killer gave a banquet and, through intermediaries, invited the claimant of blood himself or his son. It was sufficient to persuade the claimant of blood to touch his lips to the breast of the wife or mother of the debtor, and, as a result of this action alone, everlasting and indissoluble peace would be restored between them. If, on the other hand, the blood-avenger would not be appeased and would not come to the feast, then those acting for the other side endeavored to abduct the son or some other close relative of the claimant or in some other way get such a person into their house. If they succeeded, then peace was restored whether the avenger liked it or not, for to kill the foster father was considered a violation and desecration of the "breast" and 186 beneath the dignity of a brave man. Love of homeland is developed to the highest degree in the Abkhaz. Some peoples say, ubi bene, ibi patria, but the Abkhaz, on the other hand, prays: "There is no better place in the world than Abkhazia. God, save Abkhazia." In both grief and happiness alike, the Abkhaz repeats this prayer.

594 As is the case with all ancient peoples, hospitality is piously honored and maintained in Abkhazia. The Abkhaz is convinced that every guest is accompanied by seven "baraka" (blessing, /13/ bliss, abundance), one of which remains with the host, and God gives back to the guest this seventh baraka. Even the poorest Abkhaz does his utmost to treat his guest as well as possible; when an Abkhaz sees a traveler going along the village